

BANNING OF JAMAAT-SHIBIR

Govt ready to counter their covert activities
Says law minister

STAR REPORT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the government is ready to confront any covert activities by the just-banned Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir.

He made this statement while talking to journalists at the Secretariat.

Asked whether Jamaat-Shibir would go underground once banned, the minister acknowledged the possibility.

"However, we are prepared to handle such a situation," he said.

The minister also mentioned that the government has taken steps to amend the International Crimes Tribunal Act. "It is not that banned party members cannot be punished. The ban may not directly lead to penalties, but they can still be prosecuted for any crimes committed under Bangladeshi law," he explained.

In response to a question about the fate of the party's assets post-ban, he assured that measures are in place.

He also said the government has taken necessary measures so that any innocent person is not sent to jail in cases filed in connection with violence centring the quota reform protests.

The prosecution has been directed to take initiative in favour of the court's granting bail to those, including HSC examinees and minors, who are not involved in the incident of violence, he said.

Security tightened in the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police has beefed up security measures, especially at the key points to prevent any untoward situations or violent activities centring the ban on Jamaat and Shibir.

"We are ready to tackle any kind of criminal activities and sabotage. We have already strengthened security at major installations, and points of the capital," said DMP Commissioner Habibur Rahman.

Additional check posts have been set up in different major points of the capital so that no one can be able to carry out any subversive activities, said police sources.

The home ministry yesterday issued a gazette notification banning Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Chhatra Shibir, and all of its front organisations as political parties and entities under the Anti-Terrorism Act-2009.

According to the gazette, the government took the decision as per Section 18 (I) of the Anti-Terrorism Act-2009 and enlisted it as a banned entity in the second schedule of the act.



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Ctg drowns in torrential rain

Many low lying areas in port city waterlogged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Torrential rainfall since midnight led to waterlogging across numerous low-lying areas of Chattogram city yesterday.

Visiting different areas across the port city, this correspondent witnessed people going through a hard time with their daily commute.

Roads across Chawkbazar, Bakalia, Agrabad, Halishahar, GEC Intersection, Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Kapasgola, Shulakbahar, Chandgaon and Katalganj were seen submerged under ankle to knee-deep water, while few vehicles were available.

"I have been waiting for a vehicle to go to office for at least half an hour, so far in vain," said Rashed Iqbal, an office goer stuck at GEC Intersection.

Mina Das was seen wading

through knee-deep water on KB Aman Ali Road.

"I have to attend to my ailing mother-in-law, who is currently hospitalised. I am compelled to tread this dirty water from overflowing drains since I could not find a single rickshaw to reach the hospital," she lamented.

In 24 hours till 3:00pm yesterday, 148.6 millimetres of rain has been recorded in the port city, said Ali Akbar Khan, assistant meteorological officer at Chattogram Met Office.

The downpour, triggered by active monsoon winds over the area, may continue for the next 24 hours, he added.

Meanwhile, Chattogram Sea Port was advised to hoist Cautionary Signal 3, the official mentioned.

He stressed that the incessant rain might put 6,558 families, who

live on the slopes of 26 hills in the city, in risk of landslides.

According to officials of Chattogram district administration, the vulnerable families were asked to evacuate risky structures and move to safety.

However, most of them did not pay heed to the warnings, said local sources.

Contacted, Abul Bashar Mohammad Fakhruzzaman, deputy commissioner of Chattogram, said they were asking people through loudspeaker to leave their homes on the risky hill slopes and come to shelter centres.

"The shelter centres have adequate accommodation capacity, but many are still remaining in their houses. We cannot force them to evacuate their homes, so we are requesting them using loudspeakers in different vulnerable areas," he added.

Govt to consider technical support from the UN
Says foreign secretary

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen yesterday said the government first wants to see the outcome of the investigation being carried out by the judicial inquiry commission instead of engaging in anything parallel to that.

"We want them [commission] to work and complete their process," Masud told reporters after briefing the development partners at a state guesthouse.

The foreign secretary, however, said they will surely consider taking technical-related assistance from the United Nations to that end.

"We are hopeful that they [Inquiry Commission] will fairly, impartially and transparently investigate each incident to hold the responsible persons accountable and bring them to justice," Masud said.

Masud's comments came after UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk said his office is also available to deploy an independent fact-finding team, which would assist in building trust among all stakeholders and to help de-escalate tensions.

The foreign secretary said the government already responded to the 14 foreign missions who wrote to Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud recently.

"We have addressed their issues in the reply," he said, adding that today the development partners wanted to know more about freedom of assembly, and wanted to know whether any force is being applied or anyone is arrested.

He said there was no problem where people were protesting peacefully but there were some problems in some places where the people tried to create disruptions going beyond peaceful atmosphere.

Banning Jamaat-Shibir not enough
Sector Commanders' Forum calls for upholding ideals of Liberation War

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ban on Jamaat and Shibir is not sufficient on its own, said the Sector Commanders' Forum-Liberation War '71 in a statement yesterday. They advocated for a collective effort from the government, various organisations and cultural society to steer Bangladesh towards a progressive and democratic path in line with the Liberation War ideals.

The forum, in a press release signed by office

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

SHAYESTAGANJ UPAZILA IN HABIGANJ
Wastes being dumped near reserve forest

MINTU DESHWARA

For the past several years, local residents have been dumping household wastes in the open on Olipur-Shahjibazar road in Brahmandura union under Shayestaganj upazila of Habiganj.

Just on the other side of the road lies the Ranghundan Hill Forest Reserve, one of the oldest forest area in the Sylhet division. A rail track also passes along the road.

Visiting the area recently, this correspondent saw a heap of garbage has piled up on the roadside, leaving the road and walkway dirty and slippery, causing nuisance to the residents, passengers of vehicles and pedestrians alike.

"Currently, wastes from houses and markets in the neighbourhood are being disposed of on the roadside in Olipur area under supervision of some locals," said Abdur Rauf, a local resident.

Nannu Chowdhury, another resident of the area, said the situation has been like this for the last five-six years, making it difficult for people to use the road due to the stench and litter produced from the garbage

heap.

Mohan Mia, a member of Brahmandura Union Parishad, said, "There is no place or Secondary Transfer Station (STS) in the area to dump household wastes, so people are discarding those in the empty space next to the railway track."

He urged the authorities concerned to set up a waste dumping zone in the area.

Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon in Habiganj, said wastes are being discarded in the open right next to a reserve forest, posing threat to the environment and wildlife.

Contacted, Tariq Rahman, assistant conservator of forests in Habiganj, said the Forest Department is currently working on a solution to address this issue.

"The matter has been informed to the higher authorities for further action," said Saifullah, assistant engineer (Roads) of Bangladesh Railway in Shayestaganj upazila.

Contacted, Hossain Mohammad Adil Joj Mia, chairman of Brahmandura Union Parishad, said they have informed the upazila administration and steps will be taken soon to resolve the issue.



Government spreading lies: Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

B N P
Secretary
General
Mirza
Fakhrul

Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that the government, along with some pro-ruling party officials in law enforcement agencies, is spreading lies in a coordinated effort about the killings during the student protests.

He said this is merely an attempt to obscure the truth.

In a statement, he urged all government officials and employees, including those in the administration and law enforcement agencies, to stop oppressing students by ignoring the unjust and illegal orders, instructions, and pressures.

The BNP leader also cautioned that as the torture intensifies, mass resistance will only grow stronger in response.

He said the government is pitting the law and order forces and the administration against the students in a well-planned manner, which is an ominous sign for the state.

"The head of government and government minister-leaders and some Awami-minded members of law enforcement agencies are constantly resorting to lies and saying that the so-called 'third power' forces have carried out the shootings and massacre, but people all over the world saw that the general public including students did not have firearms," the BNP leader said.

He said firearms were seen in the hands of law enforcers and the Chhatra League and Jubo League. "Despite this, the government continues to repeat this chorus of lies in a superficial attempt to obscure the truth."



Employees of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited inspect a section of the metro rail at the Mirpur 10 intersection area yesterday. During the recent unrest in the country, this foot-bridge was set on fire, which is why the DMTCL is checking to see if any damage occurred to the metro rail.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

2 killed as pickup hits truck in Munshiganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

The driver of a pickup and his helper were killed when the vehicle hit a truck from behind in Lauhajong of Munshiganj early yesterday.

The accident took place around 3:30am in front of Padma bridge North Police Station on the Bangabandhu expressway as the driver lost control over the pickup, said police.

The deceased were identified as Palash Chandra Das, 24, the driver from Sharipur area in Shibpur upazila, Narsingdi; and Joy Chandra Das, 25, his assistant from the same area.

Kanchan Kumar Singh, in-charge of Hasara Highway Police Station, said they seized the pickup.



Gas supply in several Dhaka areas to be shut for 9hrs today

UNB, Dhaka

Gas supply will remain suspended for 9 hours -- from 6:00am to 9:00pm -- today in different Dhaka areas due to emergency relocation of gas pipelines.

According to Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company, the areas where gas supply will remain halted include Mugda, Ahmedbagh, Bashabo, and Shantibagh.

Titas regretted the temporary inconvenience to consumers saying that the adjacent areas may experience low pressure in gas supply for the same reason.